LOK SABHA

Tuesday, March 4, 1997/Phalguna 13, 1918 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Subsidy for Transportation of Foodgrains

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*142. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :
SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme to provide subsidy for the transportation of the foodgrains for the Public Distribution System is under consideration of the Government;

(b) if so, the subsidy proposed to be provided to various States for the purpose, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) A statement is being placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Under the Hill Transport Subsidy Scheme of the Central Government in operation since 1.8.1975, the road transportation cost of foodgrains from FCI's base supply depots to the Principal Distribution Centres (PDC) is reimbursed to the States. This scheme is applicable to predominantly hilly states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura.

Transport charges for movement of foodgrains from the main land to the UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep are also reimbursed by the Government.

The main purpose of these scheme is to compensate for comparatively higher transportation costs of foodgrains in these States.

Apart from these, there is no other scheme—existing or under consideration—to provide subsidy on transportation of foodgrains for the Public Distribution System.

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the reply given by the hon. Minister no scheme is prevalent or under consideration with the Government to provide subsidy for transportation of foodgrains. The United Front Government proclaims to be supporter of poor but the information laid on the table of the House and the ambiguous reply given reveals that it is not doing this actually.

As per the information given, such a scheme has been launched for Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Sikkim, I would like to know as to whether the Government will launch a scheme for providing subsidy on transportation of foodgrain in Nainital, Almorah, Pauri Garhwal and Tehri etc., the hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, perhaps the hon. Member has not read the reply carefully. I have not stated that no such scheme is prevalent at present. In your question you wanted to know as to whether any scheme is under consideration with the Government. My negative reply was for this question. I would like to tell that since 1.8.1975 Hilly State Transport Subsidy Scheme has been enforced. Under this scheme only those states are given subsidy which are predominently hilly state and not for hilly areas. It may be clear to you now. This scheme is for pre-dominantly hilly states which consists of at least 51 percent hilly areas. There are nine such states in the country.

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not fully satisfied with the reply given by hon. Minister but relieved to some extent. With this reply what I can make out is that this scheme will be implemented in the hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh when this would be accorded the status of a fulfledged state Uttarakhand.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, since long the Government has been providing subsidy to the hilly states for transportation of the foodgrains but it has not mentioned as to whether Union territories are given that or not ? Whether the hon. Minister will clarify it and give details of the subsidy given to Union territories during the last two years ?

(b) Will the hon. Minister see the last line of para two of the reply given which says that there is no such scheme to provide subsidy. It has been stated that expenditure incurred on transportation of foodgrains in such states are reimbursed by the Central Government. These two contradictory statements have been made in the reply. Please clarify it that which part is actually correct.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this scheme is being implemented in nine states. In view of it hon. Member has rightly asked as to whether this scheme is being implemented in Union territories also ? I would like to tell that it is being implemented in two Union territories namely Andaman and Nicobar Island and Lakshadweep. She has asked for details of subsidy during last two years. I would like to state that as per the revised estimates so far Rs. 23 lakh have been given as subsidy to these two Union territories for transportation of foodgrains.

In total during 1995-96 Rs. 28 crore 89 lakh and in 1996-97 Rs. 31 crore 67 lakh were given as subsidy for this purpose. These two Union territories are included therein.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not find the reply given to the question of Shrimati Sheela Gautam complete. Just now you have told that this scheme is in vogue since 1.8.75. Do you not find it necessary to revise this scheme which has been introduced 22 years back in 1975. What will be its impact on other states. In the last paragraph it has stated that except it, neither any such scheme for providing subsidy for transportation of foodgrain for PDS is being implemented nor is under consideration. Sir, through you I would like to know as to whether any such scheme is proposed to be taken up now after 21 or 22 years.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : The purpose of this scheme was to provide essential commodities at cheaper rates in all the hilly states. The Government of India is bearing this expenditure for providing foodgrains like rice and wheat to hilly population which is deprived of this facility. The hon. Member has asked whether proposal of any such scheme is under consideration. You can give it in writing, while reading the reply I also felt that hilly states have been covered under it but the hilly areas *...(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Whether it is Uttar Pradesh.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA : Do you propose to formulate any such scheme for hilly areas.

MR. SPEAKER : He is saying that.

[English]

He is going to give a good reply.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I would like to make a submission that I felt that these hilly areas may be left due to financial constraints. This Government is committed to welfare of poor therefore I would like to say that a survey will be conducted for this purpose for the remaining hilly areas and it will be reviewed.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Very good. After this I do not think that there is any supplementary left. I will go to the next Question No. 143.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What more can be asked after such a good reply.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, no. He has said that he was going to consider the other areas also. What else is left ?

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker...

MR. SPEAKER : You should give notice for it.

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, please give me a chance. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Prof. Kurien, I have gone to the next question. You have also been a Minister earlier.

...(Interruptions)

Seizure of Sal and Teak Wood

*143. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the U.P. Forest Department had got crores of rupees worth of Khair, Sal and Teak wood seized from Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and some other major towns in the state sometime in the past;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in the matter;

(c) whether the Supreme Court has recently banned the cutting of trees in the forests all over the country; and

(d) if so, the measures proposed to be taken to implement the Court's order in all the States ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes sir, The Uttar Pradesh Forest Department has seized Khair, Sal and other miscellaneous timber from districts bordering Haryana and Delhi in May—June 1996.

(b) In all, about 76 cubic metre Khair, and a small quantity of Sal and miscellaneous wood was recovered. The market value of the seized material is estimated around Rs. 12,47,700. Two cases have been sent to court as the offenders refused to get the case compounded.

(c) Yes Sir, The Supreme Court in their interim order of 12.12.96 has suspended felling of trees in forests, except in accordance with Working Plans, duly approved by Central Government.

(d) Central Government have advised the States/UTs to strictly comply with the orders of the Supreme Court.

[Translation]

SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, forest mafia of Nepal is also involved in unauthorised felling of trees especially in terai region of Nepal. Uttar